ORAL COMMUNICATION · STUDY GUIDE

Exam 1 Study Guide

This guide covers the first two chapters. You will learn to take any exchange apart into named pieces, pick the model that explains a breakdown, and choose a channel on purpose. Then you will treat listening as a skill with stages, purposes and moves you can perform. Work one chapter at a time. Read the "what to know" paragraphs, copy the tables out by hand, then try each worked case with the steps covered. Finish each chapter with its ten self-test items. The cram sheet at the end puts every term in one place.

WHAT THIS GUIDE COVERS

- Chapter 1 · the working definition, the eight elements, four kinds of noise, the linear, interactive and transactional models, five contexts, channel richness, irreversibility and repair, content and relational dimensions, competence and the NCA Credo.
- Chapter 2 · hearing versus listening, the six stages and HURIER, four listening purposes, listening styles, pseudolistening and its species, the speech-thought differential, paraphrase, reflection and probe, criterion-referenced feedback, teach-back and closed-loop communication.

CHAPTER 1

Foundations and Models of Communication

Read it in full: **Chapter 1 in the textbook**. Practice it in the lab: **Three Lenses, One Breakdown** and **Same Message, Five Rooms**.

What to know

The book's working definition is short: **communication is the process of using verbal and nonverbal messages to generate meaning between people in a particular context**. Three words carry the load. Process means there is no clean start or stop; today's talk with a supervisor carries last month's late arrival. Messages means only a signal travels: sound, pixels, a raised eyebrow.

Meaning is what the receiver builds from that signal, using vocabulary, history, mood, culture and sleep.

That is why the same note, "Your outline needs work," can mean "I am failing" to one student and "there is a fixable problem" to another. The difference lives at the receiving end. Communication is scored at the receiver, not at the speaker's mouth. Sending is an act; communicating is an outcome. The only reliable proof is feedback you actually inspect: a paraphrase, a correct action, a good question.

Every exchange has **eight parts**: source, encoding, message, channel, receiver, decoding, feedback and noise. The parts list is a diagnostic. In the book's hallway case, a student said "Room 12 doesn't look right to me" and help came forty minutes later. It failed at encoding. The repair is structural, not emotional: an observation (the numbers), an interpretation (the worry named), and a request with a deadline ("can you look with me now?").

Noise is anything that distorts the signal or the decoding, and it comes in four kinds. Physical noise is outside the body: hallway traffic, a bad microphone, a crowded slide. Physiological noise is in the body: fatigue, hearing loss, pain, hunger. Psychological noise is in the mind: preoccupation, bias, the argument still running from the parking lot. Semantic noise happens when sender and receiver hold different meanings for the same symbol, such as "NPO" or "bandwidth." It is the sneakiest kind because the sender feels clear and the receiver nods. The ten-second countermeasures: move or wait, say your limit out loud, name or postpone the preoccupation, and use **teach-back**.

Three models give three diagnostic questions. The **linear model** (Shannon and Weaver, 1949; Lasswell's "who says what, in which channel, to whom, with what effect," 1948) is one arrow with no feedback. It honestly fits alarms, signs and printed inserts. Run on people, it becomes "I sent the email." The **interactive model** (Schramm) adds feedback and fields of experience; meaning is shared only where the fields overlap, so you widen the overlap on purpose. The **transactional model** (Barnlund, 1970) drops the sender and receiver roles: both people send and read at once inside the physical and social setting, their relational history and cultural norms. Use the smallest model that explains the failure.

Scholars sort settings into **five contexts**: intrapersonal (with yourself), interpersonal (two people), small group (about three to fifteen people with a shared task), public (one speaker, many listeners), and mediated (any of these carried by technology, more a lens than a fifth room). What changes is planning, feedback speed and how much structure you must supply yourself. **Channel richness** runs from face to face, video, phone, voice message, email and text down to a posted notice. The more ambiguous or emotionally loaded the message, the richer the channel it deserves. On a lean channel, over-specify. Written channels are not second rate; they create a record and are often more accessible.

Communication is **irreversible** (it cannot be un-decoded) and **unrepeatable** (the same words at a new moment are a new message), so repair beats erasure. The three-move repair: name what landed, own it without arguing intent, restate what you meant. Watzlawick and colleagues (1967) showed every message has a **content dimension** and a **relational dimension**; when they conflict, listeners believe the relational one. The revision habit: replace a verdict with an observation, a judgment of the person with a report of your own experience, and end with a request or question.

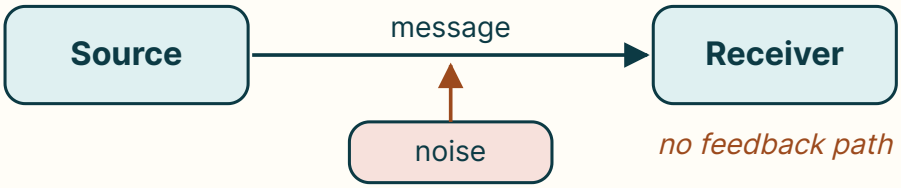
Spitzberg and Cupach define **communication competence** as effectiveness (you reached your goal) plus appropriateness (you honored the rules of the setting and relationship). It is situation specific and judged by others, and it rests on knowledge, skill and motivation. The book's rubric adds adaptability and ethics. Goals must be practicable: observable, countable and finishable this week. The NCA Credo for Ethical Communication (adopted 1999, revised 2024) asks for truthfulness, accuracy, fair representation of sources, respect for dissent and responsibility for consequences. In a speech that means citing sources out loud. The famous "7, 38, 55 percent" figure misuses Mehrabian's narrow studies of single words with conflicting cues.

LOCK THESE IN

- Communication is a process of generating meaning, and it is measured at the receiver.
- Eight parts: source, encoding, message, channel, receiver, decoding, feedback, noise. Most avoidable failures happen at encoding.
- Four noises: physical, physiological, psychological, semantic. Semantic noise is invisible from the sender's side; teach-back catches it.
- Linear asks whether the signal arrived; interactive asks whether meaning overlapped; transactional asks what the relationship was saying.
- Ambiguous or emotional messages need rich channels; lean channels demand over-specification.
- Irreversible and unrepeatable, so repair: name what landed, own it, restate what you meant.
- When content and relational dimensions conflict, listeners believe the relational one.
- Competence is effectiveness plus appropriateness, judged by others; ethics means naming sources and representing them fairly.

Linear model

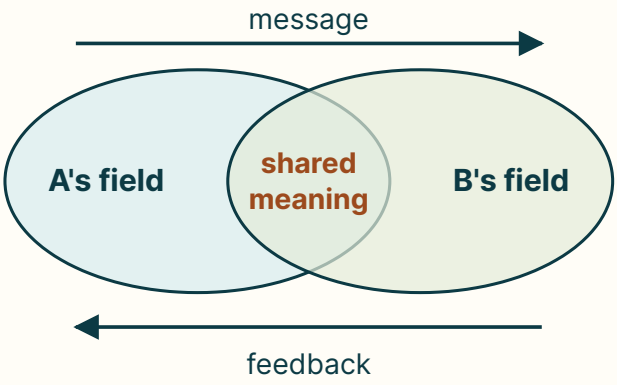
Shannon and Weaver (1949); Lasswell (1948)



Did the signal arrive intact and unambiguous?

Interactive model

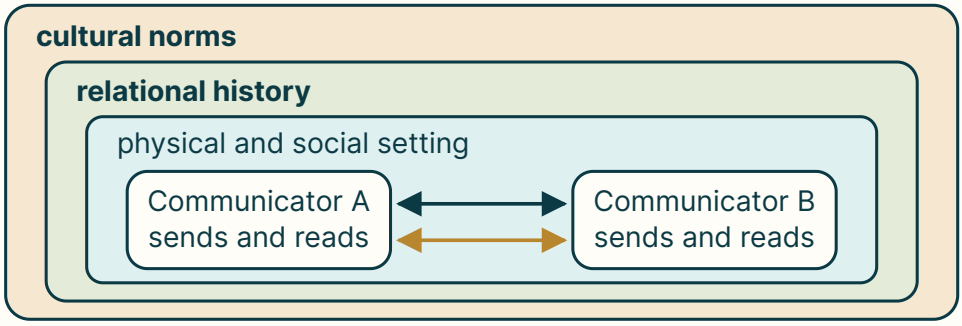
Schramm: feedback and fields of experience



What is inside the overlap, and how do I widen it?

Transactional model

Barnlund (1970): both send and read at once



What is the relationship saying under the words?

Three lenses for one breakdown. Use the smallest model that explains the failure: linear for a sign or alarm, interactive for a stalled thread, transactional when the relationship is part of the problem.

Key terms and comparisons

Term	What it means	Use it for
Source / encoding	Who starts the message; turning an idea into words, tone, gesture	Finding vague or jargon-heavy wording
Channel / receiver	The route the signal travels; the person decoding it	Spotting a channel too thin or a listener already overloaded
Decoding / feedback	Building meaning from the signal; the response that shows how it landed	Checking whether frames matched; reading the reply for meaning
Physical noise	External interference: traffic, bad microphone, crowded slide	Move, close the door, wait for the page to end
Physiological noise	Bodily: fatigue, hearing loss, hunger, pain	Say it: "give me the number twice"
Psychological noise	Preoccupation, bias, the argument in your head	Name it to yourself, or postpone
Semantic noise	Same word, different meanings	Plain words plus teach-back
Field of experience	Everything a person brings to decoding	Define a term, give an instance, ask for a paraphrase
Content / relational	The information / what it implies about status and respect	Revising feedback that is right but wounding
Competence	Effectiveness plus appropriateness	Judging any communicator, including yourself

The three models side by side

Model	Core picture	Best at explaining	Blind spot
Linear (Shannon and Weaver; Lasswell)	One arrow, degraded by noise	Alarms, signs, mass notices	No feedback, no relationship
Interactive (Schramm)	Turn-taking; overlapping fields of experience	Email threads, texting, Q and A, teach-back	Treats people as alternating, not simultaneous
Transactional (Barnlund)	Both send and receive at once inside layered contexts	Face-to-face talk, speeches, conflict	So complete it can be hard to isolate one cause

Five contexts

Context	Who	Feedback speed	Planning	Skill that matters most
Intrapersonal	You	Instant, unchecked	Almost none	Correcting distorted self-talk
Interpersonal	Two people, usually with history	Immediate	A little	Listening and repairing live
Small group	About 3 to 15 with a shared task	Fast but uneven	Moderate	Managing airtime, reaching decisions
Public	One speaker, many listeners	Delayed, mostly nonverbal	Heavy	Structure, signposting, delivery
Mediated	Any of these, through technology	Seconds to never	More than people think	Explicit wording without tone

Worked cases

WORKED CASE 1 · DIAGNOSE A HANDOFF WITH THE EIGHT PARTS

A student worker at a campus help desk tells the evening supervisor, Ines, "The printer thing is kind of weird again." Ines says "Sure" and forgets it. Two hours later forty print jobs are lost. Find the broken part and rebuild the message.

STEP 1 · WALK THE PARTS

Source: a new student worker, so credibility is low. Channel: face to face, in passing. Receiver: a supervisor with other open tasks. Feedback: "Sure," accepted without inspection.

STEP 2 · FIND THE FIRST FAILURE

The idea "jobs are vanishing from the queue" became "kind of weird." That is an **encoding** failure. Everything after it inherits the vagueness.

STEP 3 · REBUILD WITH OBSERVATION, INTERPRETATION, REQUEST

"Twelve jobs vanished from the queue in the last ten minutes. I think the print server is dropping them. Can you check it with me before the 7 p.m. rush?"

STEP 4 · CHECK THE FEEDBACK

Ask for content back, not a yes: "So you'll check it before seven?" A paraphrase or an action is proof; "Sure" is not.

WORKED CASE 2 · PICK THE SMALLEST MODEL THAT EXPLAINS IT

Three breakdowns: (a) a fire-exit map is printed so small nobody can read it; (b) a professor's email about "the usual format" draws twelve confused replies; (c) two roommates argue for a week after one texts "k." Match each to a model.

STEP 1 · ASK THE LINEAR QUESTION

Did the signal arrive intact and unambiguous? For (a) the answer is no, and nothing more is needed. Linear fits signs and alarms.

STEP 2 · ASK THE INTERACTIVE QUESTION

For (b) the signal arrived, but "the usual format" lives inside the professor's field of experience, not the students'. Interactive: widen the overlap by defining the format once.

STEP 3 · ASK THE TRANSACTIONAL QUESTION

For (c) the word was received, but a week of relational history was already part of the message, and the lean channel stripped every softening cue. Transactional.

STEP 4 · STATE THE RULE

Use the smallest model that explains the failure. The transactional model is not automatically the right answer.

WORKED CASE 3 · REVISE FOR THE RELATIONAL DIMENSION

A lab partner, Theo, writes on a shared report: "This section is wrong. Did you even read the instructions?" The facts are correct; the section does miss two required graphs. Keep the content and remove the relational damage.

STEP 1 · NAME THE TWO DIMENSIONS

Content: two required graphs are missing. Relational: "you are careless and I am above you." When they conflict, the reader believes the relational one.

STEP 2 · REPLACE THE VERDICT WITH AN OBSERVATION

"This section is wrong" becomes "The instructions ask for two graphs here, and I only see the table."

STEP 3 · END WITH A REQUEST OR QUESTION

"Want me to make one of them tonight?"

STEP 4 · CHECK THE CONTENT SURVIVED

The missing graphs are still named exactly. Only the claim about the person changed.

WORKED CASE 4 · CHOOSE A CHANNEL AND WRITE A REPAIR

A club president, Amara, must tell a member that his event proposal was voted down. She first drafts a group text. Then, in a meeting, she says, "Honestly, nobody liked it," and sees him wince.

STEP 1 · RATE THE MESSAGE

Emotionally loaded and easy to misread, so it needs the richest channel available: face to face, or video or phone if not. A group text strips tone, face and quick repair.

STEP 2 · ACCEPT IRREVERSIBILITY

"Nobody liked it" cannot be un-decoded, and "I didn't mean it that way" argues about intent.

STEP 3 · RUN THE THREE MOVES

Name what landed: "That came out as if the idea had no value." Own it: "That's on me." Restate: "The board liked the theme; the vote was about the budget, and I should have said that."

STEP 4 · WHY IT WORKS

It accepts his reading as information, not accusation, then supplies the missing content.

TRAPS PEOPLE FALL INTO

- **Treating "I told them" as proof.** Sending is an act; communicating is an outcome measured at the receiver.
- **Thinking noise means sound.** Physical noise is one of four, and usually the least dangerous because everyone notices it.
- **Calling the transactional model always right.** Use the smallest model that explains the failure; a smoke alarm really is linear.

- **Counting mediated as a separate room.** It is a lens over the other four: a group chat is mediated small group.
- **Assuming lean channels are second rate.** Written channels create a record and are often more accessible; the error is using them for messages that need tone.
- **Repairing by arguing intent.** "You're being too sensitive" adds a second injury. Name, own, restate.
- **Using high-context and low-context as a prediction.** The evidence is limited and mixed; treat it as a question, and fix the structure instead.
- **Quoting "93 percent nonverbal."** Mehrabian studied single words with conflicting cues; it was never a measure of all communication.

Chapter 1 self-test · ten items

1. In the book's working definition, communication generates what?

A. Meaning between people in a particular context
B. Symbols that carry their meaning inside the words
C. Persuasion of an audience toward one position
D. Fixed information sent from one person to another

A. Meaning between people in a particular context The definition stresses process, messages and meaning. Only a signal travels; meaning is built between people in a context.

2. A coach says "Bring your stuff Saturday," and half the team forgets their uniforms. Which element most likely failed first?

A. Encoding, because the idea became vague wording
B. Channel, because spoken words cannot carry details
C. Feedback, because the coach repeated it twice
D. Receiver, because teams never listen to coaches

A. Encoding, because the idea became vague wording "Your stuff" lost the actual idea (uniforms) at encoding. Feedback could have caught it, but the first break was the wording.

3. A caregiver nods when told a patient is "NPO after midnight" but does not know the term. What kind of noise is this?

A. Physical noise, from a loud and crowded hallway
B. Semantic noise, a shared word with different meanings
C. Physiological noise, from fatigue at a long shift
D. Psychological noise, from worry about the surgery

B. Semantic noise, a shared word with different meanings The word arrived perfectly; the meanings did not match. Semantic noise is invisible from the sender's side, and teach-back is the fix.

4. Which message is best explained by the linear model alone?

A. A face-to-face talk about a missed deadline
B. A tense text exchange between two roommates
C. A printed allergy bracelet on a hospital patient
D. A long email thread about a group project

C. A printed allergy bracelet on a hospital patient Linear fits one-way signals that want no reply, such as alarms, signs and bracelets. The others involve feedback or relationship.

5. What does Schramm's interactive model add to the linear model?

A. A noise source feeding into the channel from below
B. A formula for scoring a speaker's competence
C. Feedback and overlapping fields of experience
D. Simultaneous sending inside three layers of context

C. Feedback and overlapping fields of experience Schramm added the return path and the idea that meaning is shared only where fields of experience overlap. Simultaneity is Barnlund's addition.

6. A group member must learn that her section was cut from the presentation. Which channel fits best?

A. A posted note in the shared folder for the group
B. Face to face, or video or phone if needed
C. An email so the decision is on the record first
D. A short group text so everyone hears it at once

B. Face to face, or video or phone if needed The message is emotionally loaded and easy to misread, so it needs tone, face and the chance to repair within seconds.

7. Which repair best fits the book's three moves after a remark that hurt a classmate?

A. "I deleted the message, so there's really nothing left to discuss."
B. "I didn't mean it that way at all, so please don't take it so personally."
C. "Let's just forget I said anything and move on to the next slide."
D. "That came out as a dig. That's on me. I meant the transition lost me."

D. "That came out as a dig. That's on me. I meant the transition lost me." Name what landed, own it without arguing intent, then restate what you meant. Erasing or disputing the reading adds a second injury.

8. When the content and relational dimensions of a message conflict, what usually happens?

A. Listeners believe whichever was spoken first
B. Listeners believe the content dimension
C. Listeners ignore both and ask for a repeat
D. Listeners believe the relational dimension

D. Listeners believe the relational dimension Watzlawick's point: the relational claim wins, which is why factually flawless feedback can end a working relationship.

9. A student wins every group vote by talking over others. By Spitzberg and Cupach's definition, he is:

A. Appropriate but not effective, so not competent
B. Effective but not appropriate, so not competent
C. Competent, because the group did agree in the end
D. Competent, because he reached his goal each time

B. Effective but not appropriate, so not competent Competence needs both axes. Steamrolling reaches the goal but breaks the rules of the setting.

10. Which goal is practicable in the book's sense?

A. "I will try to stop rambling so much whenever I talk in class."
B. "I will be a better and more patient listener to my classmates."
C. "In the next three huddles I will state my point in one sentence first."
D. "I will become a far more confident and relaxed speaker during this term."

C. "In the next three huddles I will state my point in one sentence first." A practicable goal is observable, countable and finishable this week. The others name feelings or vague traits.

CHAPTER 2

Listening

Read it in full: **Chapter 2 in the textbook**. Practice it in the lab: **Where Did the Message Die?** and **Ten Words From Better**.

What to know

Hearing is physiology: pressure waves move the eardrum, three small bones amplify it, and hair cells in the cochlea fire. You cannot switch it off. **Listening** is voluntary and effortful: the active process of receiving, attending to, understanding, remembering, evaluating and responding to

spoken and nonverbal messages. Each verb can fail on its own. "I told you" and "You never told me" are often both true statements about different stages.

Judi Brownell's **HURIER model** names six stages: hearing, understanding, remembering, interpreting, evaluating and responding. Other scholars count differently, and there is no settled number; the value is that a model makes you ask where a breakdown happened. The book's working table gives attending (selecting) its own row, because that is where most breakdowns start, and lets interpreting and evaluating share one. In a fifteen-second handoff with seven facts, each stage has a specific repair, and "Got it" is not confirmation; it reports a feeling. Say back the content.

Be careful with the famous claim that listeners keep only **25 percent**. It traces largely to mid-century work by Ralph Nichols under narrow lecture conditions; the quarter figure was delayed recall, immediate recall ran closer to half, and it has never been cleanly replicated. The defensible version: unaided recall drops fast, faster for detail than gist, and listeners overestimate what they kept. Confidence outlives accuracy.

Before technique comes purpose. **Informational** listening aims at accurate acquisition. **Critical** listening tests a claim: evidence, reasoning, what is missing. **Empathic** listening tries to understand the speaker's experience from inside their frame, without fixing it. **Appreciative** listening is for enjoyment and craft, and it is the only one where drifting is allowed. Most listening disasters are purpose mismatches, not effort failures. When unsure, ask: "Do you want to vent, or do you want to figure out what to do?" Advice offered before it is requested is usually heard as a verdict.

People also carry **listening styles**. Watson, Barker and Weaver (1990s) named people-oriented, action-oriented, content-oriented and time-oriented styles; Bodie, Worthington and Gearhart later revised them to relational, analytical, task-oriented and critical, partly because the original scale's measurement did not hold up. Treat the labels as vocabulary, not a validated type. The practical fix is one sentence of style bridging: "Give me the headline first, then the caveats."

Pseudolistening performs attention without substance. Its species: stage-hogging (your turn as loading time), selective listening (only self-relevant topics), defensive listening (hearing attack in

neutral words), ambush listening (collecting ammunition), insulated listening (avoiding one topic), and glazing over (honest drift). Divided attention is task switching, not parallel processing. Automatic, non-language tasks such as walking or doodling interfere little; reading or writing words competes for the same language system.

Conversation runs about 125 to 175 words per minute, and we can process language several times faster. That gap is the **speech-thought differential**. Spend the spare capacity on predicting where the speaker is going, silently summarizing, noticing what is missing and watching the nonverbal channel. Of the four noises, physical noise is the easiest to fix and the most often tolerated: move three feet.

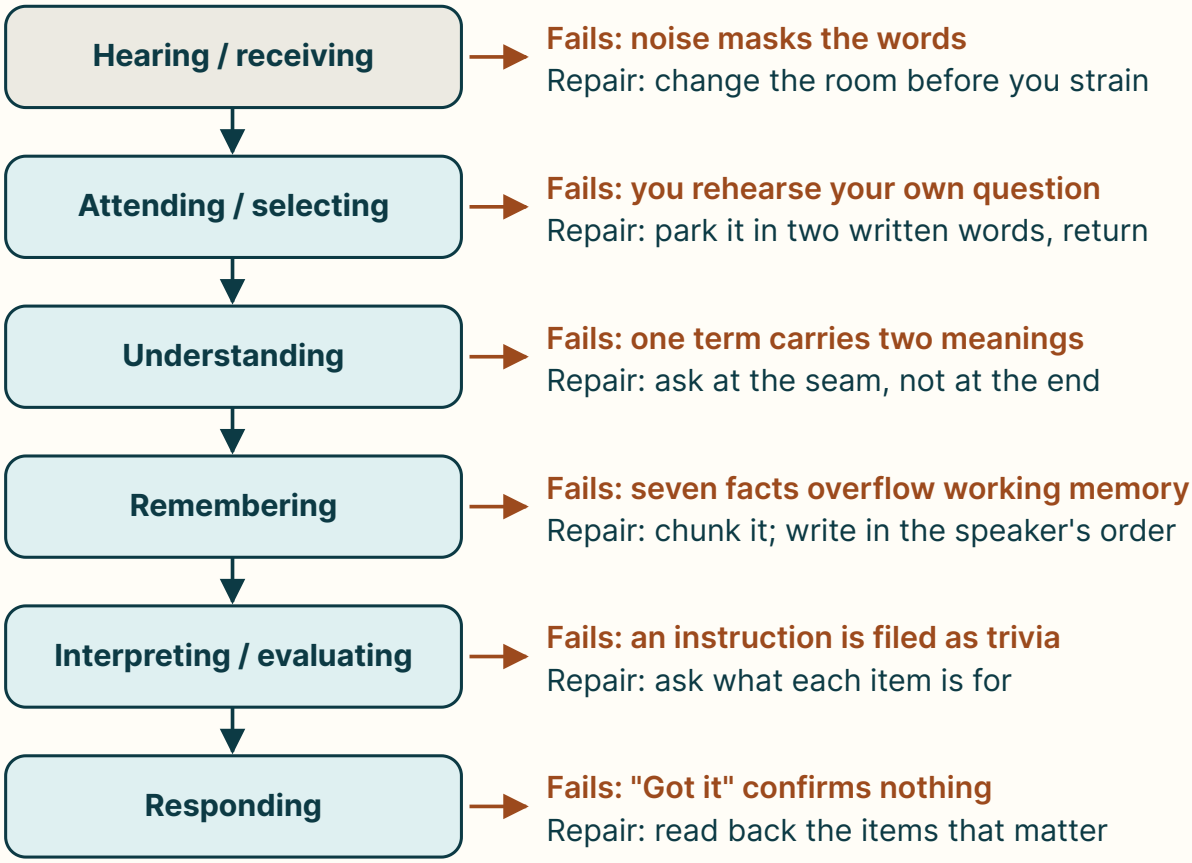
The performable moves are attend, paraphrase, reflect, probe, confirm and restrain. Egan's **SOLER** (sit squarely, open posture, lean forward, eye contact, relax) is a scaffold that reads as fake when rigid and assumes one cultural norm about gaze; Stickley's SURETY adds self-awareness. Use the principle: remove signals that you are leaving. A **paraphrase** re-encodes meaning in your words and invites correction; parroting proves only that your ears work. A **reflection of feeling** names an emotion tentatively. An **open probe** cannot be answered yes or no. Working memory holds about four items, so take generative notes in the speaker's order. Wait three seconds after a speaker stops.

When it counts, verify. **Criterion-referenced feedback** names the evidence, its effect on you, and one change. Rubin's photograph study found that identical audio was rated more accented and understood less when students saw an Asian instructor's photo, so some of "I can't understand them" is expectation. Access is the room's job: face the person, one voice at a time, captions on. **Teach-back** tests the explainer ("tell me how you'll take it so I know I explained it well"); **closed-loop communication** reads an order back verbatim and the sender confirms. SBAR gives handoffs a known structure. And let people finish their opening statement; one 2019 study reported a median of about eleven seconds before interruption.

LOCK THESE IN

- Hearing is automatic; listening is a decision you keep making.
- Every failure has a stage: receiving, attending, understanding, remembering, interpreting and evaluating, or responding.
- "Got it" reports a feeling. Confirmation needs content.
- Four purposes: informational, critical, empathic, appreciative. Most injuries are mismatches; ask which one is wanted.
- Pseudolistening species: stage-hogging, selective, defensive, ambush, insulated, glazing over.
- Spend the speech-thought surplus on predicting, summarizing, noticing gaps and watching nonverbals.
- Paraphrase re-encodes; parroting repeats. Open probes cannot be answered yes or no.
- Feedback: evidence, effect, one change. Verify with teach-back and closed-loop read-back.

Hearing happens to you. The next five stages are choices.



Name the stage before you name the person. Brownell's HURIER model and this six-stage version both exist to locate a failure. Each stage has its own repair, and "try harder" is none of them.

Key terms and comparisons

Term	What it means	Use it for
Hearing	Involuntary reception of sound by the ear	Separating physiology from effort
Listening	Receiving, attending, understanding, remembering, evaluating, responding	Locating a breakdown by stage
HURIER	Brownell: hearing, understanding, remembering, interpreting, evaluating, responding	A stage checklist
Speech-thought differential	Speaking is slower than thinking, leaving spare capacity	Predict, summarize, notice gaps
Paraphrase	Content restated in your own words, inviting correction	Proving you understood
Reflection of feeling	Naming the emotion you think you heard, tentatively	Empathic listening
Open probe	A question that cannot be answered yes or no	Inviting elaboration on their topic
Teach-back	Listener explains it back; framed as a check on the speaker	Instructions, education, discharge
Closed-loop	Verbatim read-back, then sender confirms	Orders and handoffs
Criterion-referenced feedback	Evidence, effect, one change	Peer speech feedback

Four listening purposes

Purpose	Question you answer	Good looks like	Signature failure
Informational	What exactly is claimed, in what order?	You can restate the structure	Copying words you cannot explain
Critical	Should I believe this?	You can name the evidence type and the counter-case	Rejecting the speaker, not testing the claim
Empathic	What is this like from where they stand?	They say "yes, exactly" to your paraphrase	Jumping to advice or your own story
Appreciative	What is working, and why?	You can name a craft choice to steal	Passive consumption

Pseudolistening and one-move repairs

Name	What it sounds like	One-move repair
Pseudolistening	"Right. Right. Totally."	Swap the next "right" for a content paraphrase
Stage-hogging	"That reminds me of when I..."	Ask one follow-up before talking about yourself
Selective	"Wait, what about my unit?"	Write one line per item, including others' items
Defensive	"So you're saying I did it wrong."	Paraphrase the literal content first
Ambush	"Two minutes ago you said the opposite."	Steelman before you rebut
Insulated	"Anyway, about the schedule..."	Name the avoidance and go back
Glazing over	"Sorry, what?"	Predict their next point
Divided attention	"Keep going" while typing	Close the laptop or ask for ten seconds

Worked cases

WORKED CASE 1 · LOCATE A LISTENING FAILURE BY STAGE

During a lab briefing, the instructor says: "Goggles on before you open the acid cabinet, rinse spills for fifteen minutes, and log every bottle you take." A student, Kenji, is drafting a text about lunch. Later he cannot remember the logging rule, though he says he "heard everything."

STEP 1 · HEARING

The room was quiet and he heard the words. Receiving worked.

STEP 2 · ATTENDING

He was composing a text, a language task that competes with comprehension. Attention was split, so the message was sampled, not processed.

STEP 3 · NAME THE STAGE

The failure is at **attending**, with remembering inheriting the loss. The repair is structural: phone away during briefings.

STEP 4 · ADD CONFIRMATION

He reads back the items that matter: "Goggles first, rinse fifteen minutes, log every bottle." Now the instructor can catch a gap.

WORKED CASE 2 · CHOOSE THE LISTENING PURPOSE

A friend, Dana, says after an exam: "I studied for nine hours and still blanked on the second page." Write three possible replies and pick the one that does not require guessing.

STEP 1 · THE UNREQUESTED FIX

"You should use flashcards next time." This answers a question she did not ask and is heard as a verdict.

STEP 2 · THE COMPETING STORY

"That's nothing, I blanked on the whole exam." Her experience becomes a preamble to yours: stage-hogging.

STEP 3 · THE PURPOSE CHECK

"That sounds awful. Do you want to vent, or figure out what to change?" She picks the listening you give.

STEP 4 · FOLLOW HER CHOICE

If she says vent, your job is paraphrase and reflection: "Nine hours in and the page went blank. That's frustrating." Advice waits until asked.

WORKED CASE 3 · TURN WEAK RESPONSES INTO STRONG ONES

Rebuild three weak responses heard at a tutoring center: "Any questions?", "Did that make you angry?" and "Got it, thanks."

STEP 1 · OPEN THE CLOSED QUESTION

"Any questions?" invites a yes or no. Stronger: "Which step would be hardest to explain to a classmate tonight?"

STEP 2 · ELICIT, DO NOT SUPPLY, THE FEELING

"Did that make you angry?" hands them the emotion. Stronger: "What went through your head when the grade posted?"

STEP 3 · ADD CORRECTABLE CONTENT

"Got it, thanks" verifies nothing. Stronger: "Got it: chapters 4 and 5, Thursday at noon, room 210."

STEP 4 · SEE THE PATTERN

Each fix adds content the speaker can correct, opens a closed question, or names instead of evaluates.

WORKED CASE 4 · WRITE CRITERION-REFERENCED FEEDBACK

A classmate, Anika, gives a speech on campus food pantries. Your first notes say "good energy" and "kind of confusing in the middle." Make both useful.

STEP 1 · FIND THE EVIDENCE

She raised her volume at each main point. In the middle she gave "thirty percent" without saying thirty percent of whom.

STEP 2 · NAME THE EFFECT ON YOU

The volume shifts told you where sections divided. The number lost you because you could not tell if it meant the campus or the country.

STEP 3 · NAME ONE CHANGE

"One phrase, 'of students on this campus,' would fix the statistic."

STEP 4 · ASSEMBLE IT

"You raised your volume on each main point, so I always knew where I was. I lost the thread at the thirty percent figure; adding 'of students on this campus' would fix it."

TRAPS PEOPLE FALL INTO

- **Treating hearing and listening as the same.** You can hear perfectly and understand nothing.
- **Accepting "Got it."** It reports a feeling of understanding, which predicts real understanding poorly.

- **Quoting "we keep 25 percent" as fact.** Keep the direction, drop the precision: recall of detail drops fast and we overestimate it.
- **Bringing critical listening to an empathic moment.** Advice before it is asked is heard as a verdict.
- **Calling listening styles a validated personality type.** The evidence supports stable preferences, not any one four-box scheme.
- **Believing you can listen while writing email.** Language tasks compete; it is switching, not multitasking.
- **Parroting and calling it a paraphrase.** Repeating words proves reception, not understanding.
- **Applying SOLER as a rule.** Rigid eye contact can read as challenge in many communities; adjust to the person.
- **Asking "Do you understand?"** It has one acceptable answer. Teach-back tests the explanation instead.

Chapter 2 self-test · ten items

1. What separates hearing from listening in the book?

A. Hearing includes memory; listening ends at sound
B. They differ only in how loud the speaker talks
C. Hearing is involuntary physiology; listening is effortful
D. Hearing needs full attention; listening is mostly reflex

C. Hearing is involuntary physiology; listening is effortful Hearing happens without consent. Listening is the active process of receiving, attending, understanding, remembering, evaluating and responding.

2. A nurse hears "warn him before you silence the alarm" but files it as trivia about personality. Which stage failed?

A. Responding to the speaker
B. Interpreting and evaluating
C. Attending and selecting
D. Hearing and receiving

B. Interpreting and evaluating She received and understood the words but judged the item irrelevant. The repair is asking what each item is for.

3. What is the best response to a claim that people keep only 25 percent of what they hear?

A. Accept the direction but question the precise figure
B. Reject it, since recall cannot really be measured
C. Accept it, since textbooks have used it for decades
D. Raise it to 50, since that was the immediate result

A. Accept the direction but question the precise figure The figure comes from narrow mid-century work by Nichols and was never cleanly replicated. The defensible claim is that detail fades fast and we overestimate recall.

4. A roommate describes a brutal shift. Which reply avoids both unrequested advice and a competing story?

A. "You should talk to your charge nurse about it tomorrow."
B. "That's nothing; last week I had nine patients myself."
C. "Do you want to vent, or figure out what to do about it?"
D. "Well, every job has a bad day now and then, right?"

C. "Do you want to vent, or figure out what to do about it?" A purpose check lets the speaker choose the listening she needs, so nobody has to guess.

5. A listener attends closely only to catch contradictions for a rebuttal. This is:

A. Defensive listening
B. Selective listening
C. Ambush listening
D. Insulated listening

C. Ambush listening Ambush listening gathers ammunition. The repair is to steelman the speaker's strongest version before rebutting.

6. Which use of spare capacity does the book recommend?

A. Planning the rest of your day while you wait
B. Predicting where the speaker is heading next
C. Drafting your reply while they are still talking
D. Answering a quick email to save some time

B. Predicting where the speaker is heading next Productive uses are predicting, summarizing, noticing gaps and watching nonverbals. Drafting replies and email are drift or divided attention.

7. Which is a paraphrase rather than parroting?

A. "Childcare is impossible with two days' notice, you said."
B. "Two days' notice makes childcare impossible. I hear that."
C. "So the two days' notice makes childcare impossible for you, then."
D. "So the change is fine, but the short notice breaks your childcare?"

D. "So the change is fine, but the short notice breaks your childcare?" A paraphrase re-encodes the meaning in new words and invites correction. The others return the speaker's own wording.

8. Which is criterion-referenced feedback?

A. "Try to be more confident next time you get up there."
B. "Great job overall, the speech had really good energy."
C. "You said um a lot, so try to stop saying it so often."
D. "Your fillers came after each slide change; pause there."

D. "Your fillers came after each slide change; pause there." It names the evidence, its location and one change. The others are global or prescribe a feeling.

9. Why does teach-back work better than "Do you understand?"

A. It asks for a demonstration and tests the explainer
B. It is quicker and avoids any follow-up questions
C. It lets the listener simply answer yes or no
D. It shows the speaker's authority over the listener

A. It asks for a demonstration and tests the explainer "Do you understand?" has one socially acceptable answer. Teach-back asks for the content back and frames it as a check on the speaker.

10. In closed-loop communication, what happens after the receiver reads the order back?

A. The receiver writes it down and acts on it
B. A third person signs off on the exchange
C. The sender repeats the order a second time
D. The sender explicitly confirms it is correct

D. The sender explicitly confirms it is correct Read-back alone is half the loop. The sender's "That's correct" closes it.

ONE PAGE

Cram sheet

Everything from chapters 1 and 2 in one place. Cover the right column and see if you can rebuild each row.

Names and dates to know

Who	What	Remember it as
Shannon and Weaver (1949)	Linear model, built for telephone and radio	One arrow, no return
Lasswell (1948)	"Who says what, in which channel, to whom, with what effect"	Same linear shape
Schramm	Interactive model: feedback, fields of experience	Meaning lives in the overlap
Barnlund (1970)	Transactional model	Both send and read at once
Watzlawick and colleagues (1967)	Content and relational dimensions; "one cannot not communicate"	Relational wins
Motley	Communication needs intent to signal	The counter-camp on silence
Hall	High-context and low-context	A question, not a prediction
Spitzberg and Cupach	Competence = effectiveness + appropriateness	Both axes or neither
NCA Credo (1999, revised 2024)	Truthfulness, accuracy, respect for dissent, responsibility	Cite out loud
Mehrabian (1971)	Single words, conflicting cues, judging feelings	Never "93 percent nonverbal"
Brownell	HURIER listening stages	Find the stage
Nichols	The old "25 percent" recall figure	Direction yes, number no
Egan; Stickley	SOLER; SURETY	Principle over posture
Rubin	Photo changed rated accent and comprehension	Expectation is adjustable

Lists to recite

List	Items
Eight parts	Source, encoding, message, channel, receiver, decoding, feedback, noise
Four noises	Physical, physiological, psychological, semantic
Five contexts	Intrapersonal, interpersonal, small group (3 to 15), public, mediated
Richness ladder	Face to face, video, phone, voice message, email, text, posted notice
Three principles	Irreversible, unrepeatable, learned and rule-governed
Competence rubric	Appropriateness, effectiveness, adaptability, ethics; built on knowledge, skill, motivation
Six listening stages	Hearing, attending, understanding, remembering, interpreting and evaluating, responding
Four purposes	Informational, critical, empathic, appreciative
Styles (original)	People, action, content, time; revised: relational, analytical, task-oriented, critical
Active moves	Attend, paraphrase, reflect, probe, confirm, restrain

Formulas that are not math

Move	The pattern
Urgent message	Observation + interpretation + request with a deadline
Three-move repair	Name what landed, own it, restate what you meant
Relational revision	Verdict to observation; judgment to your experience; end with a request
Practicable goal	Observable, countable, finishable this week
Useful feedback request	"Where did you lose me?" not "How did I do?"
Criterion feedback	Evidence, effect, one change
Teach-back	"Tell me what you will do so I know I explained it well"
Closed loop	Order, verbatim read-back, "That's correct"
SBAR	Situation, background, assessment, recommendation
Numbers	Talk runs about 125 to 175 words per minute; working memory about four items; eye contact about 70% while listening

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